

IN THE DRAWINGS:

Please replace the drawing sheets containing Figs. 1 and 2 with the enclosed replacement drawing sheets.

REMARKS:

Careful consideration has been given to the Official Action of August 14, 2006 and reconsideration of the application as amended is respectfully requested.

Submitted herewith are replacement drawing sheets containing replacement Figs. 1 and 2. Fig. 1 has been amended to delete reference numeral "12" designating the clutch. In Fig. 2, the reference numeral "31" designating the spring has been amended to read "39", and the reference numeral "31" designating the stop ring has been amended to read "38" to overcome the Examiner's objections.

Accordingly, the Specification has been amended to conform to the amended Fig. 2.

The Specification has been amended to replace the phrase "integral with" with "connected to" to correct a mistranslation from Italian. It would be clear to one skilled in the art from the drawings and the original description that the two parts are connected to one another; not made in a single piece. Similar corrections have been made in the claims.

The reference to the claims has been deleted in the Specification.

The replacement Abstract, which contains less than 150 words, is also submitted herewith to overcome the Examiner's objections thereto.

The claims have been amended to overcome the Examiner's objections and to define

more clearly the invention as will be explained later.

Claims 1-12 have been rejected by the Examiner under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph as being indefinite.

In this respect, claims 1 and 2 have been amended to delete the phrases objected by the Examiner thereby obviating the Examiner's objection. Claim 10 has been revised to define more clearly the invention.

Claims 1-4, 8, 9, and 12 have been rejected by the Examiner under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being allegedly anticipated by Gambini (EP 0898096).

The claimed invention is clearly distinguished over Gambini as will be explained hereafter.

As discussed in the summary of the invention of the present application, it is desirable to increase the torque transmittable at start-up to make continuous variable transmissions more suitable for heavier-duty application. To achieve this, the claimed invention provides a centrifugal actuating assembly comprising a centrifugal actuating device controlling the clutch means. The actuating device includes push means for exerting an axial thrust on the first half-pulley (6a) when an angular speed value of the input shaft is greater than a first threshold value, so as to connect the drive pulley to the flywheel. The claimed invention also provides a speed regulating device for moving the second half-pulley axially with respect to

the first half-pulley. The speed regulating device is active when the angular speed value of the input shaft is above a second threshold value; the second threshold value being higher than the first threshold value.

In contrast, Gambini (EP 0898096) does not disclose a centrifugal clutch actuating device engaging the clutch means above a first speed threshold value and a speed regulating device for varying the pulley ratio active above a second speed level greater than the first speed threshold value.

In Gambini, both the clutch actuating device and the speed regulating device are constituted by a single unit having a plurality of loose weights (22) which are contained inside a piston chamber and act on a push member (piston 23). This construction does not distinguish between first and second speed threshold value and perform the accompanying operations as claimed. In fact, the weights 22 of Gambini start to exert axial force on piston 23 once the speed is sufficient to “centrifuge” the weights to the outer area of the piston chamber as shown in the bottom part of the figure of Gambini. In this respect, a first speed threshold value and a second, higher speed threshold value are not defined.

Furthermore, Gambini does not disclose a centrifugal actuating device having push means exerting an axial thrust on the first half pulley. The first half pulley, as defined in the claims, is the “fixed” half pulley referenced “6a” in the drawings, i.e., the pulley that remains axially fixed during speed regulation.

In contrast, the “push means” of Gambini (piston 23) acts on the movable half pulley (4), which is movable to adjust the ratio. In the Gambini disclosure, both the clutch engagement and the speed variation step are performed by the same device (piston 23) which acts on the movable half pulley 4. Consequently, the clutch is engaged via an axial force that is transmitted from the mobile half pulley to the fixed half pulley through the belt.

In the present claimed invention, the push means (61) acts on the first pulley and does not transmit any force through the belt while engaging the clutch. The result of this arrangement is that a greater torque can be transmitted at start-up, i.e. when maximum torque is required.

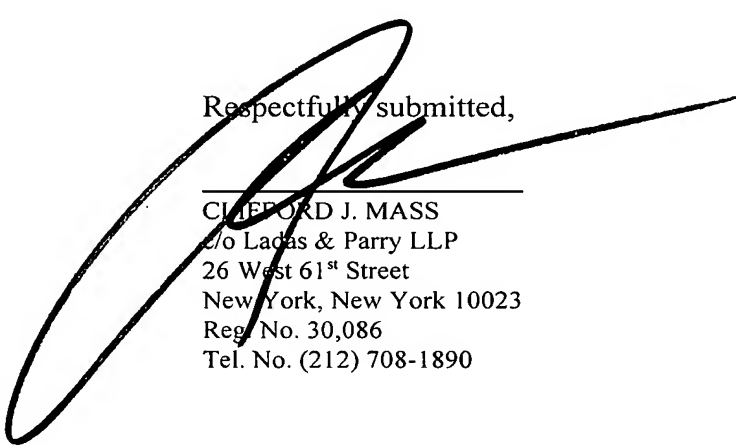
In response to the Examiner’s nonstatutory double patenting rejection, Applicant submits that the present application is patentably distinct from co-pending application No. 10/691,160. In that co-pending application, the push means does not act on the first half-pulley as claimed in the present application, but rather on the second half-pulley as described above in connection with Gambini. Therefore, in 10/691,160, the clutch is engaged via an axial force that is transmitted from the mobile half pulley to the fixed half pulley through the belt.

In the present claimed invention, the push means (61) acts on the first pulley, i.e. it does not transmit any force through the belt while engaging the clutch. As stated above, this arrangement allows a greater torque to be transmitted at start-up, i.e. when maximum torque is required. Since Gambini does not teach or suggest modify the arrangement of 10/691,160,

the present claimed invention is non-obvious and patentably distinct from that co-pending application.

In view of the above actions and comments, it is respectfully submitted that the application as now presented is in condition for allowance and early notice thereof is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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